

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 2753

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PINT, RP

SUBJECT: DETAINEES CHARGE MILITARY ASKED THEM TO DECLARE IBP
CANDIDACIES

REF: MANILA 2568

1. SUMMARY: EIGHT LEFTIST POLITICAL DETAINEES HAVE CHARGED
IN A SIGNED PRESS STATEMENT THAT THE MILITARY "INVITED" THEM
TO REQUEST RELEASE FROM DETENTION IN ORDER TO RUN FOR
INTERIM BATASANG PAMBANSA SEATS. THEIR REQUESTS -- ALONG
WITH BENIGNO AQUINO'S -- WERE LATER TURNED DOWN BY THE
ATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL. POLITICAL OPPOSITION DISTRIBUTED
THEIR STATEMENT AT PRESS CONFERENCE ANNOUNCING AQUINO'S
CANDIDACY AS HEAD OF OPPOSITION SLATE IN MANILA (SEPTTEL).
IF TRUE, THE "INVITATIONS" MAY INDICATE THE EXTENT
THE GOP IS WILLING TO GO TO DISCREDIT AQUINO AND TO INFLUENCE
PUBLIC ATTITUDES AGAINST THE OPPOSITION. END SUMMARY.

2. AT FEBRUARY 16 PRESS CONFERENCE HELD AT AQUINO'S QUEZON CITY
RESIDENCE, OPPOSITION SPOKESMAN DISTRIBUTED PRESS STATEMENT
(NOT COVERED BY LOCAL PRESS) SIGNED BY EIGHT DETAINEES AT BICUTAN
REHABILITATION CENTER.

INCLUDED AMONG SIGNATORIES ARE FATHERS DE LA TORRE
AND NABAYRA (THE ONLY CLERGY CURRENTLY DETAINED) AND
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COMMUNIST LEADER NELIA SANCHO. THEY WERE AMONG 14 DETAINEES
WHO REPORTEDLY ASKED FOR RELEASE FROM DETENTION IN ORDER
TO CAMPAIGN FOR IBP SEATS. THESE REQUESTS WERE CONSIDERED
AND DENIED FEBRUARY 14 BY NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL IN A
MOVE GENERALLY BELIEVED TO BE INTENDED TO EXCLUDE RELEASE
OF BENIGNO AQUINO.

3. OPPOSITION LEADER JOVITO SALONGA PROVIDED POLCOUNS WITH COPY OF THIS STATEMENT. PARTIAL TEXT FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: WE FILED OUR REQUESTS FOR RELEASE, NOT ON OUR OWN INITIATIVE, BUT AT THE INSTANCE OF THE MILITARY, SPECIFICALLY PC CHIEF MAJ. GEN. FIDEL V. RAMOS, COURSED THROUGH THE FORMER CAMP COMMANDER OF OUR DETENTION CENTER, COL. RAMON SALAYA. ...COL. SALAYA EXPLICITLY SAID HE WAS ORDERED BY GEN. RAMOS TO SEE US AND INVITED US TO FILE OUR CERTIFICATES OF CANDIDACY FOR THE IBP. HE EVEN CAME WITH PREPARED DRAFTS OF LETTERS TO RAMOS ASKING FOR PERMANENT RELEASE TO ENABLE US TO CAMPAIGN, WHICH HE ASKED US TO COPY OR REVISE, SIGN AND SEND TO RAMOS THROUGH HOM. ... WE HAVE BECOME WISE TO SUCH MOVES AS MERELY INTENDED TO PROVIDE THE GOVERNMENT WITH PROPAGANDA AND DEODORIZE THE MARTIAL LAW REGIME. WE WERE THEREFORE WARY THAT THE OFFER MADE THROUGH COL. SALAYA COULD BE A RUSE TO CONVINCE OUR PEOPLE THAT THE COMING ELECTIONS WERE SO GENUINE THAT EVEN POLITICAL DETAINEES WANTED TO RUN. AT THE SAME TIME* HOWEVER, WE HAVE TO TAKE SERIOUSLY ANY INITIATIVE THAT WOULD LEAD TO THE RELEASE OF AS MANY POLITICAL DETAINEES AS POSSIBLE. AND WE AGREED AMONG OURSELVES TO WRITE TO GEN. RAMOS IF ONLY TO PROBE THE GOVERNMENT'S SINCERITY. ... WE MADE SURE, HOWEVER, THAT OUR LETTERS MADE IT CLEAR

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THAT THE INITIAL SUGGESTION EMANATED FROM THE MILITARY AND THAT IT WAS A CONDITION FOR OUR FILING CERTIFICATES OF CANDIDACY THAT ALL POLITICAL DETAINEES, NOT ONLY OURSELVES, WOULD BE RELEASED. THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL'S DECISION HAS CONFIRMED OUR SUSPICION. ... IN THUS TRIFLING WITH US, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO TRIFLED WITH ITS OWN ELECTIONS. ... THE MARTIAL LAW REGIME HAS ALSO REVEALED ITS TRUE NATURE: A GOVERNMENT BUILT ON FEAR AND DECEPTION, WILLING TO STOP AT NOTHING AND TO STOOP TO ANY CHicanERY IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE ITS SELFISH GOALS. UNQUOTE.

4. STAFF MEMBERS AT CHURCH'S TASK FORCE FOR DETAINEES TOLD EMBOFFS THE SAME STORY FEBRUARY 16. SHE SAID SHE QUESTIONED THE WISDOM OF THE DETAINEES' MOVE, BUT IT WAS UNDERSTANDABLE "SINCE SOME OF THEM HAVE BEEN DETAINED FOR SEVEN YEARS AND THERE WAS A ONE-PERCENT CHANCE THEY MIGHT BE RELEASED IF THEY DID SO." SHE SAID SHE HAD NO DETAILS ABOUT THE SIMILAR REQUESTS ALLEGEDLY MADE BY MAJOR COMMUNIST PARTY LEADERS JOSE MARIA SISON, BERNABE BUSCAYNO, VICTOR CORPUZ AND OTHERS WHO ARE NOT BEING HELD AT BICUTAN.

5. COMMENT: THE STATEMENT PERHAPS DELIBERATELY DOES NOT MENTION DISCREDITING THE CANDIDACY OF BENIGNO AQUINO AS THE REASON FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S "INVITATION" TO THESE OTHER DETAINEES. GIVEN THE STRENGTH OF FEELING IN MALACANANG REGARDUNG THE AQUINO CANDIDACY THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH MANIPULATION BYSTHE GOP CANNOT BE EXCLUDED. END COMMENT.

6. COPY OF PRESS RELEASE BEING POUCHED TO EA/PHL. NEWSOM

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